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MINISTRY OF DEFENCE  
CHIEFS OF STAFF COMMITTEE

CONFIDENTIAL ANNEX  
TO

COB 22ND MEETING/77, HELD ON TUESDAY  
21ST AUGUST 1979 AT 10.15 AM

ITEM 1. THE FUTURE OF THE UK NUCLEAR DETERRENT

1. SIR NEIL CAMERON said that they would recall instructing (1) the Defence Policy Staff to prepare a commentary on the Duff/Mason Report which might serve as a submission of their views to the Secretary of State and in particular would highlight those areas of the Report which required a military emphasis. Before considering the draft commentary (2) they would wish to invite CS4 to debrief them on his recent visit to Washington.

2. PROFESSOR MASON (Chief Scientific Adviser) said that, together with representatives of the PCO and Cabinet Office, he had recently discussed nuclear matters in Washington with a team of Defence and State Department officials led by Mr David Aaron. The atmosphere had been good throughout and it had been evident that the US wished to help; indeed, Mr Aaron had opened the discussions by commenting that it was in the US national interest to do so. The team had received presentations on the various possible SLBM options including the 'flat deck' TRIDENT C4 which did not have multiple independent re-entry vehicles (MIRV) and on the main features of the Cruise Missile (CM) programme. Although massive testing programmes were underway, no satisfactory data on CM vulnerability was yet available and it was clear that the only viable US SLCM programme was for an anti-ship missile system.

3. Continuing, PROFESSOR MASON said that following an exchange on deterrent philosophy the discussion had turned

References:

- 1. COB(1) 17/7/79
- 2. Attached to COB 3260/901a dated 15 August 1979.

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